

MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT
between the NEW JERSEY STATE INTERSCHOLASTIC ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION
and the NEW JERSEY DIVISION ON CIVIL RIGHTS

The New Jersey Legislature created the New Jersey Division on Civil Rights (DCR) nearly seventy-five years ago to enforce the New Jersey Law Against Discrimination (LAD) and to “prevent and eliminate discrimination” in the State of New Jersey. N.J.S.A. § 10:5-6.

The LAD prohibits discrimination in housing, employment, and places of public accommodation (including schools) on the basis of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, national origin, disability, and other protected characteristics. N.J.S.A. § 10:5-12.

The New Jersey State Interscholastic Athletic Association (NJSIAA) is a voluntary non-profit organization that regulates student athletic activities, as provided by N.J.S.A. § 18A:11-3, and is made up of 437 accredited public, private and parochial high schools in the State. NJSIAA, through its Executive Committee, sets forth the rules and regulations governing high school athletics in order to equalize competition for member schools.

DCR and NJSIAA have a mutual interest in ensuring that high school sports in New Jersey are free of bias and are open on equal terms without regard to race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, national origin, disability, and other protected characteristics.

The New Jersey Legislature enacted the Anti-Bullying Bill of Rights Act, N.J.S.A. § 18A:37-13 et seq., to address issues of harassment, intimidation, and bullying in the State’s public schools, including incidents occurring at school-sponsored events. The LAD likewise covers such harassment and bullying if based on race or other characteristics protected under the LAD. *L.W. ex rel. L.G. v. Toms River Reg'l Sch. Bd. of Educ.*, 189 N.J. 381, 406-410 (2007).

Prior to 2013, NJSIAA had in place a Sportsmanship Rule that prohibited taunting and trash-talking and established associated penalties for rule violations, but did not expressly prohibit conduct targeted at athletes based on race, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, disability, religion, national origin, or other LAD protected characteristics.

In 2013, NJSIAA and DCR signed a Memorandum of Understanding to combat bias in New Jersey high school sports. Its provisions included the following:

1. NJSIAA would amend the Sportsmanship provisions in its Bylaws to clarify that “harassing conduct related to race, gender, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation or religion at an interscholastic athletic event constitutes unsportsmanlike conduct,” and that any such conduct “shall be reported to the New Jersey Division on Civil Rights and may result in further investigation by NJSIAA.”
2. NJSIAA would provide training for game officials to ensure that they “vigilantly enforce the amendments to the Sportsmanship Rule.”
3. NJSIAA would provide training for school officials and coaches regarding the amendments to the Sportsmanship Rule and would amend the pregame statement given

- by game officials to team captains and/or athletes before every contest to highlight the amendment to the Sportsmanship Rule.
4. NJSIAA would track any instances of harassing conduct related to race, gender, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation or religion.

Consistent with the MOU, NJSIAA has directed member schools to read the following anti-bias statement whenever a public address system is in use at an NJSIAA-sponsored event:

Today's contest is being conducted according to the rules of the New Jersey State Interscholastic Athletic Association. These rules provide for fair competition among players. Spectators can help promote good sportsmanship by observing the rules of fair play. Any verbal, written, or physical conduct related to race, gender, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation or religion shall not be tolerated, could subject the violator to ejection, and may result in penalties being assessed against your team. Everyone is requested to take personal responsibility for keeping this competition at a high level of good sportsmanship.

Since October 2013, NJSIAA has referred more than 30 potential bias incidents to DCR under the terms of the MOU.

DCR became aware that on December 19, 2018, A.J.,¹ a 16-year-old student-athlete and wrestler from Buena Regional High School, had his locs cut while on the mat prior to a wrestling match against Oakcrest High School.

NJSIAA notified DCR of the incident and suspended the referee involved, A.M., from officiating further matches while the matter was under review.

Under NJSIAA's Sportsmanship Rule, the President and Executive Director of NJSIAA have the authority to investigate and take appropriate action on any reported flagrant violation of the Sportsmanship Rule. Here, NJSIAA's Executive Director formed a task force consisting of himself, the president and vice president of NJSIAA, and the chair of NJSIAA's Controversies Committee.

The rules for high school wrestling are developed and published by the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS). The 2018-19 NFHS Wrestling Rules Book governed the December 19, 2018, match. The Rules that were relevant to this incident stated as follows:

Rule 4.2.1, page 16:

During competition all wrestlers shall be clean shaven, with sideburns trimmed no lower than earlobe level and hair trimmed and well groomed. The hair, in its natural state, shall not extend below the top of an ordinary shirt collar in the back; and on the sides, the

¹ This MOA uses initials throughout to refer to all of the individuals interviewed in order to protect the privacy of individuals who are not parties to any action before DCR.

hair shall not extend below earlobe level; in the front, the hair shall not extend below the eyebrows. A neatly trimmed mustache that does not extend below the line of the lower lip shall be permissible. If an individual has hair longer than allowed by rule, it may be braided or rolled if it is contained in a cover so that the hair rule is satisfied. The legal hair cover shall be attached to the ear guards. A bandana is not considered a legal hair cover. The legal hair cover must be of a solid material and be nonabrasive. The wrestler opting to wear a legal hair cover must wear it to the weigh-in procedure and be checked for grooming with it on. The legal hair cover must be removed prior to the wrestler stepping on the scale to be weighed. If a referee is not present at weigh-ins, the hair cover must be checked by the meet referee upon arrival at the site.

If an individual has facial hair it must be covered with a face mask. All legal hair covers and face masks will be considered as special equipment. If an individual's hair is as abrasive as an unshaved face, the individual shall be required to shave the head as smooth as a face is required, or wear a legal hair cover.

Rule 4.3.1, page 17:

Special equipment includes, but is not limited to: (a) legal hair coverings attached to the ear guards, facemasks, braces, casts, supports, eye protection, and socks....

Rule 8.1.1, page 41:

Any contestant reporting to the scorer's table not properly equipped or not ready to wrestle is a technical violation. A wrestler with greasy substances on the body or uniform, improper grooming, objectionable pads and braces, illegal equipment, illegal uniform or any equipment that is detected as being illegal after the match has started shall be disqualified if not removed or corrected within the 1½-minute injury time.

The 2018-19 NFHS Wrestling Case Book and Manual provided hypothetical situations describing various possible violations of these rules, including:

4.2.1 SITUATION A:

A wrestler in the 126-pound class reports to the weigh-in with hair longer than allowed by rule. RULING: If an individual has hair longer than allowed by rule it must be contained in a legal hair cover that is attached to the ear guards. The wrestler opting to wear a legal hair cover must wear it to the weigh-in procedure and be checked for grooming with it on. The legal hair cover must be removed prior to the wrestler stepping on the scale to be weighed. The legal hair cover shall be attached to the ear guards. It must also be of a solid material and be non-abrasive....

4.2.1 SITUATION B:

A wrestler reports to the weigh-in with hair braided and rolled up in a bun. Is this permissible for competition? RULING: The rule states that the hair must be in its natural state and when it is in that state it cannot extend below the top of an ordinary shirt collar in the back or, on the sides, the hair shall not extend below earlobe level; in the front, the hair shall not extend below the eyebrows. If an individual has hair longer than allowed it must be contained in a legal hair cover that is attached to the ear guards, so that the hair rule is satisfied. If a legal hair cover is used it must be presented at weigh-ins and the hair may remain braided or rolled up in a bun as long as it does not constitute a hazard.

4.2.1 SITUATION E:

Wrestler A appears at weigh-ins with hair in tight cornrows. After making the prescribed weight, the wrestler indicates no desire to undo the hair as it takes time and is expensive to have performed. RULING: This is permissible if the hair is covered by a legal hair cover that is attached to the ear guards. COMMENT: A legal hair cover is intended to allow a wrestler to compete with hair longer than permitted by rule. A referee cannot assume the hairstyle meets the prescribed rule, therefore should a wrestler choose not to meet the rule, a legal hair cover attached to the ear guards shall be required and approved at weigh-ins.

After reviewing the relevant rules, DCR and NJSIAA both commenced investigations into the December 19th incident, interviewing or receiving written statements from more than 21 individuals combined.² Several individuals sat for interviews with only DCR or with only NJSIAA. While this agreement does not include factual findings, the following information was gathered from those witness statements and interviews and that information helps to inform this agreement:

1. A.J. wears his hair in locs. In an interview with DCR, he stated that he forms the locs himself by moving his hair in a circular motion when he gets out of the shower each morning. His brother N.J., who is also on the Buena wrestling team, wears his hair in an Afro.
2. In an interview with DCR, E.H., the NFHS National Rules Interpreter, explained that Rule 4.2.1 has been in place for decades, and it has always governed hair length, not style. He stated that the rule is about wrestler safety, and protecting a wrestler from hair

² Neither A.J. nor his parents filed a complaint with DCR. Pursuant to the 2013 MOU, however, DCR commenced a Director-initiated investigation upon the referral from NJSIAA. A.J., along with his mother and brother, sat for interviews with DCR. Because they did not file a complaint, neither A.J. nor his parents are parties in DCR's investigation, nor are they parties to this agreement.

that is injurious to himself or others. According to E.H., hair in locs or twists was “in its natural state” and “would not require a hair covering if it did not extend below the earlobe or eyebrows, or did not touch the top of the shirt.” Similarly, “a high-top afro” which “grows up,” would not be an issue and would not require a hair covering. In an interview with NJSIAA, E.H. nonetheless agreed that there was a “lack of understanding” with the meaning of “natural state” in Rule 4.2.1.

3. In a written statement to NJSIAA, wrestling official R.R. stated that he volunteered to hold a pre-season meeting with the Buena wrestling team on December 13, 2018 to discuss rule changes for the upcoming season. R.R. wrote that during this pre-season meeting he noticed that A.J. had his “hair style” in a “fashion” that was not in compliance with Rule 4.2.1 and told A.J. he would need a legal hair covering to wrestle. R.R. told DCR in interviews that he believed A.J.’s hair was not in compliance due to its length. R.R. told NJSIAA in an interview that A.J.’s hair did not meet the requirements of the rule “because of both reasons – the length and because it was rolled.”
4. Two days later, on December 15, 2018, A.J. wrestled in at least two different matches with at least two different referees, with the same hairstyle and without wearing any hair covering. None of the referees present required A.J. to wear a hair covering or mentioned anything about his hair violating Rule 4.2.1.
5. A.J. was scheduled to wrestle at a match on December 19, 2018, refereed by A.M.
6. In an interview with DCR, A.J. stated that during the pre-match skin check in the wrestling room on December 19th, A.M. instructed him that he needed to shave, but did not tell him that he needed a hair covering or mention anything to him about his hair violating Rule 4.2.1.
7. In an interview with NJSIAA, Assistant Coach B.A. also stated that A.M. told A.J. and a few others that they needed to shave, and B.A. accompanied A.J. to shave. According to B.A., when they came back, A.M. checked the wrestlers’ faces, but B.A. did not hear A.M. instruct A.J. that he would need a hair covering.
8. In a written statement to the NJSIAA, Buena Head Coach G.M. wrote: “Upon [A.J.’s] return the official told him [he] needed a cap for his hair. [A.J.] said he had one in the locker room.” In a later interview with DCR, G.M. clarified that during the skin check, A.M. informed A.J. that he needed to shave. A.J. went to the locker room in order to shave, and while he was gone, A.M. told G.M. that he had “concerns” about A.J.’s hair. G.M. stated that A.M. was not specific about what his “concerns” were, but stated that A.J.’s hair needed to be covered. When A.J. returned from the locker room, G.M. “believed” A.M. told A.J. that he needed a hair covering, but G.M. did not actually hear any such conversation. Instead, G.M. assumed such a conversation had occurred because he observed A.J. go back to the locker room to get a hair covering.
9. In an interview with DCR, N.J. stated that after the skin check, A.M. approached N.J. (not A.J.) and stated, “You and the other one might need a head cap.” N.J. took “the other

one” to mean A.J., and informed A.J. that A.M. might require him to wear a hair covering.

10. In an interview with DCR, A.J. stated that after being told by his brother N.J. that he might need a hair covering, he attempted to procure a hair covering that attached to his ear guards as required by the rules, but was unable to locate one.
11. In a March 28, 2019 interview with DCR and NJSIAA, A.M. stated that during the pre-match skin check, he verbally informed A.J. that he would need to use a hair covering. A.M. stated that A.J. said he had a legal hair covering in the gym. A.M. stated that he asked A.J. to present the covering for inspection prior to his match, but A.J. failed to do so.
12. In a written statement immediately after the incident, A.M. stated that A.J. was required to use a hair covering because “his hair was not in its natural state, it was braided.” However, in the interview with NJSIAA and DCR four months after the incident, A.M. stated that A.J. was required to wear a hair covering because he had “tape or rubber bands” at the ends of his hair. A.M. stated that A.J.’s hair was “abrasive and altered” and therefore a “hindrance to his opponent.” A.M. also stated that he did not know the difference between braids and locs, and believed that both are hair that is “not in its natural state.”
13. In an interview with DCR, A.J. stated that at the time of the December 19th match, his hair was not braided, it was in locs, and he did not have any rubber bands or tape in his hair. Photographic and video evidence from prior to A.J.’s match, and statements from A.J., N.J. and Buena volunteer coach E.C., verified that A.J.’s hair was in locs, not braids, and that he had no rubber bands or tape in his hair.
14. All witnesses agree that when A.J. stepped onto the mat to begin his match, A.M. told him his hair covering was not legal because it did not attach to the ear guards.
15. In an interview with DCR, Buena head coach G.M. stated that he and other members of the Buena coaching staff attempted to intercede, telling A.M. that A.J.’s hair was not too long and did not otherwise violate the hair rule, and that A.J. had been permitted to wrestle without a hair covering four days earlier. G.M. said that A.M. responded, “They’re dreadlocks. They’re not in their natural state.”
16. According to Coaches G.M. and B.A., A.M. stated that A.J. could not wrestle with locs or without a legal hair covering. In an interview with DCR, Buena volunteer coach E.C. stated that he said to A.M., “I don’t know why you’re making him do this, his hair isn’t too long.” E.C. stated that A.M. responded, “It’s not the length, his hair is unnatural.”
17. In an interview with DCR, A.J. stated that he did not want to forfeit the bout and did not think he would be allowed to wrestle unless he cut his hair, so he said “cut it.” A.J. stated that trainer D.F. came over and asked A.M., “What do I cut?” and A.M. responded with something to the effect of, “Cut until I say so” or “Cut until I say it’s good.”

18. In an interview with DCR and NJSIAA, A.M. stated that he did not give D.F. any instructions on how to cut A.J.'s hair, and it was the coach who told D.F. to cut A.J.'s hair. A.M. stated that he was "at the head table keeping time" and was therefore "10-15 feet away" and "not having conversations with the trainer or coach." However, in an interview with NJSIAA, B.A. stated that after D.F. began to cut A.J.'s hair on the mat, A.M. said "that's enough," and D.F. stopped cutting A.J.'s hair.
19. The wrestling match then commenced, without A.J. wearing any head covering.
20. On January 7, 2019, NJSIAA's then-Rules Interpreter circulated a memo to the New Jersey Wrestling Officials Association (NJWOA) chapter secretaries with instructions to forward it to all NJWOA members, including all referees in the State of New Jersey responsible for officiating high school wrestling matches. The memo repeated the text of Rule 4.2.1 and attached two photos with the words "attached photos REQUIRE legal hair cover." The first photo is of a young white man with hair that appears to violate the length rule, braided on one side, twisted on the other, and pulled into a bun. The second photo is of a young Black man with short hair in twists. The hair in the second photo clearly does not violate the length prohibitions of Rule 4.2.1 because it does not extend below the top of an ordinary shirt collar in the back, below the earlobe on the sides, or below the eyebrows in the front. But the NJSIAA Rules Interpreter wrote to all NJWOA members that this short hairstyle was nonetheless prohibited under Rule 4.2.1 and required a hair cover.
21. Several New Jersey wrestling officials sent letters to NJSIAA and told NJSIAA during interviews that they too interpreted Rule 4.2.1 to prohibit locs and twists regardless of length, and believed both A.M. and the NJSIAA Rules Interpreter had correctly interpreted and applied Rule 4.2.1.
22. In an interview with DCR, Buena Athletic Director D.A. stated that on January 8th, the day after the NJSIAA Rules Interpreter sent his memo, G.M., a wrestling official assigned to officiate at a January 9th wrestling match between Buena and Absegami High School, contacted him. G.M. told D.A. that he intended to require A.J. to wear a hair covering even though A.J.'s hair had been cut just a few weeks prior. G.M. explained that his decision was based on the NJSIAA Rules Interpreter's memo and A.J.'s hairstyle; it was not based on the length of A.J.'s hair. Athletic Director D.A. stated that as a result of G.M.'s decision, he and Buena Superintendent D.C. Jr., requested clarification directly from NJSIAA's Executive Director on Rule 4.2.1.
23. NJSIAA's Executive Director contacted E.H., the NFHS Rules Interpreter, to request a formal clarification.
24. In an interview with DCR, Buena Superintendent D.C. stated that he and D.A. set a deadline of 1 p.m. on January 9th to receive clarification from NFHS, because they needed time to get logistics in place for the match. D.C. stated that they did not receive the clarification memo from NFHS until 2:36 p.m. on January 9th, and before they received it had already decided to postpone the match against Absegami.

25. In a memo dated January 8 but sent on January 9, 2019, NFHS Rules Interpreter E.H. explained that Rule 4.2.1 was “based on length, not style.” His memo read as follows: “There is a wide spectrum of modern hair styles that might give the appearance that they are in violation of the hair rule, but in actuality they are just creative expressions of today’s youth. We interpret hair ‘in its natural state’ is how your hair appears when you wake up in the morning. Please understand that our rule is solely based on length, not style.”
26. In an interview with DCR, E.H. stated that: (1) the hairstyle in the second photo in the NJSIAA Rules Interpreter’s memo did not require a hair covering, and he disagreed with the NJSIAA Rules Interpreter’s interpretation of Rule 4.2.1; (2) he easily responded to NJSIAA’s request for clarification of Rule 4.2.1 because that rule governed length and not style; and (3) he did not receive any requests from any other states regarding how Rule 4.2.1 should be interpreted with respect to hair styles either before or after January 2019. In an interview with NJSIAA, E.H. nonetheless agreed that there was a “lack of understanding” with the meaning of “natural state” in Rule 4.2.1 and “there were misconceptions about the hair of children of color.”
27. The NJSIAA Rules Interpreter wrote back to E.H.: “My interpretation of 4.2.1 is as follows: If hair is rolled and/or braided it is not possible to see it in ‘its natural state.’ By no means are we trying to limit the ‘creative expressions of our youth.’ We are just requiring those that want to be ‘creative’ to abide by Rule 4.2.1 for a 6-minute match. In my opinion, that does not limit creativity. If we don’t require rolled and/or braided hair to be covered we are leaving it up to each individual official to ‘estimate’ the ‘length’ of hair and that will promote inconsistencies from official to official. That creates an even larger dilemma. I agree there is a ‘wide spectrum of modern hair styles that might give the appearance they are in violation’ but how are we to know a wrestler is in compliance if the hair is braided and/or rolled? If you are saying hair that is braided and/or rolled does not need a legal cover, please let me know and I will forward your interpretation to my membership ASAP. As of tonight, your interpretation contradicts my interpretation that was sent to my membership this week.”
28. NJSIAA’s Executive Director determined that the E.H. clarification would stand, and based on the E.H. clarification, A.J. wrestled the rest of the season without a hair cover.
29. In April 2019, the NFHS Wrestling Rules Committee amended Rule 4.2.1 as follows (additions are underlined, deletions are shown in strikeout):

ART. 1 . . . During competition all wrestlers shall be clean shaven, with sideburns trimmed no lower than earlobe level. Hair trimmed and well groomed The hair in its natural state, shall not extend below the top of an ordinary shirt collar in the back; and on the sides, the hair shall not extend below earlobe level; in the front, the hair shall not extend below the eyebrows. (Photos 2-3) A neatly trimmed mustache that does not extend below the line of the lower lip shall be permissible. If an individual has hair longer than allowed by rule, ~~it may be braided, or rolled if it is~~ it shall be contained in a cover so

that the hair rule is satisfied. (Photo 4) Physical hair treatment items that are hard and /or abrasive such as (beads, bobby pins, barrettes, pins, hair clips, etc. or any other hair control device) shall not be permitted. A legal hair-controlled device such as rubber band(s) shall be secured so as not to come out readily during wrestling. The legal cover shall be attached to the ear guards...at the site. If an individual has facial hair, it ~~must~~ shall be covered with a face mask. All legal hair covers and face masks will be considered as special equipment. If an individual's hair is as abrasive as an unshaved face, the individual shall be required to shave the head as smooth as a face is required, or wear a legal hair cover.

Rationale:

The term “well groomed” is extremely subjective and there is no standard to meet such an arbitrary expectation. Hair that is manipulated poses no threat to either wrestler. It is neither abrasive nor cumbersome. However, physical hair treatments do present a risk to either wrestler due to the hardness, texture (sharpness) or abrasiveness and should not be allowed.

30. In an interview with DCR, a parent stated that in 2012, A.M. told him that his 6-year-old son, who is bi-racial and who wore his hair in locs, could not wrestle because he had “stuff in his hair.”
31. In 2016, the New Jersey Wrestling Officials Association (NJWOA) Ethics Committee suspended A.M. for allegedly directing a racial slur at a Black referee. During his interview with DCR and NJSIAA, A.M. refused to answer any questions about the 2016 incident, but a contemporaneous investigation by the NJWOA found the racial bias charge against A.M. to be “credible.”
32. A.M. and other New Jersey wrestling officials interpreted Rule 4.2.1 to prohibit certain natural Black hairstyles, including locs and twists, regardless of length. And the NJSIAA Rules Interpreter codified in a memo that short twists, a traditionally Black hairstyle, were not permissible under the rules.
33. During his interview with DCR and NJSIAA, A.M. expressed his view that traditionally Black hairstyles including locs and braids were the same and were not “natural.” A.M. also offered a rationale for his December 19th decision that A.J. needed a hair covering that he did not offer in his statement immediately following the incident, and that has been demonstrated to be false: that A.J. had rubber bands or tape in his hair that could have injured his opponent. All available evidence contradicted A.M.’s assertion that A.J. had rubber bands or tape in his hair.

Both DCR and NJSIAA seek to ensure that wrestling officials, coaches, and athletic personnel in New Jersey interpret Rule 4.2.1 in a way that does not discriminate against Black wrestlers. In particular, they seek to eliminate any interpretation of Rule 4.2.1 that allowed

wrestling officials to determine that traditionally Black hairstyles were “unnatural” or to subject wrestlers with traditionally Black hairstyles to differential treatment as to when a haircover was required.

Accordingly, NJSIAA and DCR agree that:

1. Prior to the start of the 2019-2020 wrestling season, NJSIAA will provide in-person training to all local Rules Interpreters and all wrestling officials in the state emphasizing that: a) NFHS Wrestling Rule 4.2.1 is based only on hair length, not on hairstyle; b) the January 7, 2019 interpretation written by the NJSIAA Rules Interpreter has no force or effect; and c) the second photo in the January 7, 2019 memo of a young Black man with short twists does *not* require a hair covering under Rule 4.2.1. Such training will also include information about hairstyles and hair-related discrimination, especially discrimination against those with traditionally Black hairstyles. NJSIAA and DCR will collaborate to determine who will provide such training and what it will consist of. NJSIAA shall ensure that its new Rules Interpreter appointed for the 2019-2020 wrestling season is fully trained on and familiar with the requirements of this Memorandum of Agreement before beginning work.
2. NJSIAA will suspend A.M. from officiating any pre-season, regular season, postseason, or tournament matches for the 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 seasons and will require A.M. to go through all of the training laid out in paragraphs 1 & 3 prior to any future reinstatement as an official.
3. By the end of the 2020-2021 school year, NJSIAA will provide in-person implicit bias training to all high school sports officials in New Jersey. DCR will collaborate with NJSIAA to develop a list of approved implicit bias trainers.
4. NJSIAA will take all steps necessary to require that athletic administrators, coaches, and athletic trainers at member schools receive implicit bias training by the end of the 2020-2021 school year. NJSIAA and DCR will work together to develop a list of approved trainers and may seek the assistance of the Department of Education.
5. NJSIAA will monitor its member schools to ensure that they are making the required announcement at the start of any NJSIAA event (including pre-season, regular season, tournament, and playoff events) in which a public address system is in place: “Today’s contest is being conducted according to the rules of the New Jersey State Interscholastic Athletic Association. These rules provide for fair competition among players. Spectators can help promote good sportsmanship by observing the rules of fair play. Any verbal, written, or physical conduct related to race, gender, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation or religion shall not be tolerated, could subject the violator to ejection, and may result in penalties being assessed against your team. Everyone is requested to take personal responsibility for keeping this competition at a high level of good sportsmanship.” In any multi-game tournament, this announcement must be made before the start of each game in the tournament.

6. NJSIAA will monitor its member schools to ensure that game officials are giving the required pre-game statement to team captains and/or athletes before every contest:

The New Jersey State Interscholastic Athletic Association requires officials to enforce all rules regarding unsportsmanlike conduct by coaches and players. There will be no tolerance for negative statements or actions between opposing players or coaches. This includes taunting, baiting, berating opponents, or “trash-talking” or actions which ridicule or cause embarrassment to them. It also includes harassing conduct related to race, gender, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation, or religion. If such comments are heard, a penalty will be assessed immediately. We have been instructed not to issue warnings. It is your responsibility to remind your team of this policy.

7. Except as otherwise modified herein, the terms of the 2013 MOU between NJSIAA and DCR remain in effect. Therefore, NJSIAA will continue to report to DCR any and all harassing conduct at any interscholastic athletic event in New Jersey related to race, gender, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation or religion. NJSIAA will also continue to provide training to referees, coaches, and school officials on the bias prohibitions contained in NJSIAA’s Sportsmanship Rule.
8. Both parties shall have the authority to enforce the provisions of this Agreement.
9. This Agreement is entered into by each party freely and voluntarily and with full knowledge and understanding of the obligations and duties imposed by this Agreement.
10. NJSIAA and DCR consent to the form, content, and entry of this Agreement on the dates beside their respective signatures (below).

Larry White
NEW JERSEY STATE INTERSCHOLASTIC ATHLETIC
ASSOCIATION
By Larry White, Executive Director

9/18/19
DATE

Rachel Wainer
NEW JERSEY DIVISION ON CIVIL RIGHTS
By Rachel Wainer Apter, Director

9/17/19
DATE